

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL
ROBIN P. SWAN, COMMANDING GENERAL, COALITION MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TRAINING TEAM SUBJECT: THE FUTURE OF THE IRAQI ARMY FORCE STRUCTURE
MODERATOR: CHARLES "JACK" HOLT, CHIEF, NEW MEDIA OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS TIME: 10:00 A.M. EDT DATE:
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GEN. SWAN: (In progress) -- General John Allen during that day, and we
were talking about Sheik Satar (sp), and that task force or that batallion that
was there did sponsor that 5K race, you're exactly right.

(Cross talk.)

Q Yeah, I wrote about that for ON Point, and actually we -- that's
going to be in Runners' World, so the whole world will know about the 3.7 and
the 5K race in Ramadi coming in the January issue as a matter of fact. GEN.
SWAN: Yeah, that's terrific. And just -- if you will, is Clay Barney (sp) on
the line?

MR. HOLT: Clay, did you join us? We had a couple of other folks join
us. Who's on here with us? I guess not.

GEN. SWAN: Yeah, that's okay. Hey, look, I'm going to let you open it
up to questions.

You know who I am. Primarily focused on force generation, force
replenishment, force sustainment for the Iraqi army. And why don't we just get
right after whatever your questions are or whatever you'd like to know.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

Andrew, since you were first online, why don't you start us off?

Q Appreciate it.

General, easy question then. How close are these -- are the IEAs to
being able to take over things? I guess that's going to be the big question
back in the States for the next 16 months or so.

GEN. SWAN: Yeah, I think that that's a great question, Andrew. And you
know that they're increasing their capabilities to be able to do that everyday.

You know, from the standpoint of -- I'm just going to talk about the Army side of the security forces. You know as well, particularly out in al Anbar, Andrew, that the push to be able to move the army in particular out of the population areas because security has been gained and is continuing to be gained there and really getting a police presence there as well. And they're making a lot of great strides associated with that.

But from the Iraqi army presence, whenever you say that they're going to take over things, you think about all of the requirements from an army that is needed to be able to operate on its own.

I will tell you that from my foxhole they -- from a training, from an equipping standpoint -- (audio break) -- from an operational standpoint, the way that they're fighting today, the way that they're standing firm in their ground, really conducting some sophisticated operations throughout the country -- most notably certainly out in Al Anbar province, but also up in Nineveh, and even -- and here in Baghdad as well. So a lot of great improvement on that one.

Now, that said, they have their problems about standing on their own too, Andrew, as you know. Their logistics system is still immature and it has a long way to grow. I think that from the standpoint of unit-level logistics they're getting better. At the mid-level, at the operational level, if you will, we're working with them now to finalize the number of logistics and sustainment bases needed throughout the country to be able to provide throughput and supply-point distribution and supply and continuous sustainment to the forces. And we're coming along on that. At the higher level, at the Taji National Depot, the ability to refurbish tract-and-wheeled vehicles, have warehousing function that continues sustainment to move out to -- through the distribution process is immature. And I would say that in the next 12 to 18 months that process from a depot perspective will continue to increase.

So two parts to the answer: Number one is tactical level. Increasing capabilities of the tactical competence of soldiers, leaders -- and units, by the way. Partnering, certainly, with our formations and being able to continue that and have access to the coalition enablers is an important part of what they're doing. The challenge, of course, is with logistics and also to be able to sustain some of the momentum that we have recently on getting noncommissioned officers and officers into these formations as we generate them -- and some good news on that front.

So continued movement forward. Not -- I'm not comfortable, nor is anyone, I believe, with the state of their sustainment system, but it's coming along.

Q Great. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. D.J.

Q Yes, sir. On the prime minister's expansion program -- the three divisions, the five or six brigades and so on -- what is the status of that and how far along? GEN. SWAN: Well, let me -- I'm glad you asked that question. Let me give you a run down of where we are with the Iraqi army today. The total number of divisions is moving toward 13. You remember that the original prime minister's initiative worked at 10. There were some associated issues with -- not issues, but security strategic decisions made to be able to take a look at Baghdad and say, what about a division here in Baghdad? What about Basra and some of the issues associated with Basra that they wanted to be able to increase

their force presence in the south? So they've created a division that will be stationed down in Basra, along with the 10th Division.

And finally, the infrastructure brigades that along the Baiji-to-Kirkuk/Kirkuk-to-Baghdad pipeline -- I'm sorry, just reverse -- Kirkuk-to-Baiji/Baiji-to-Baghdad pipeline, the creation of the 12th Division in Tikrit. So those are -- the 14th Division is in the process of generating right now, as is the 11th Division headquarters. The 12th Division will be made and generated probably mid-next year and it will be headquartered in Tikrit.

Let me talk to you about brigades. We're in the process right now of a tremendous of time in force generation for brigades. In fact, over the next five months the Iraqi army is generating five brigades. Let me tell you who they are: For Baghdad we created or they created the 11th Division. It is primarily in areas of operation to the east of the Tigris River. It will have four brigades associated with it. Two of those brigades have been re-designated. One brigade will come to them from the 6th Division. Another brigade will come to them from the 1st Division. The remaining two brigades -- 2nd of the 11th and 3rd of the 11th -- are in force generation right now.

And I've got to tell you, incredibly optimistic about how we're doing this right now. And we're doing it from a unit-set fielding approach where in the training base we have linked up and the Iraqis have linked the leadership and the soldiers, while the soldiers are still going through basic combat training. We have moved all of the equipment to Besmaya-(Malta ?) -- a combat training center. Once the soldiers finish basic combat training they're now in session at Besmaya as an entire brigade. The equipment is issued. They go through operator training on the equipment, then they go through a series of individual training, which quite frankly includes the fielding of M16-A4 rifles. And then the operator-maintenance training and then some small unit collective task training on intra-control point procedures and close quarters combat in particular. So 3rd Brigade at the 11th Division is doing that right now. It will be followed in three weeks or thereabouts by the 2nd Brigade of the 11th Division. And that will fill out the 11th Division by the end of this -- by the end of this year. And it will operate in Baghdad.

The next brigade up is the 3rd Brigade of the 14th Division and it will be assigned in down in Basra province for the 14th Division. At end state, the 14th will have all four brigades. Like the 11th, the 14th will receive two of its brigades as re-designated units from the 10th Division, and then the Iraqis will generate two new brigades -- the 3rd Brigade and the 4th Brigade -- for the 14th -- the 3rd of the 14th. That's the first -- 4th of the 14th will be sometime mid- next year.

The next brigade in the queue then will be the 4th Brigade for the 5th Division. That is an important brigade that will begin to be formed after the beginning of this 2008, and it is -- it will be employed in Diyala province with the remainder of the 5th Division. And then the final brigade, in the near-term force generation aspect, is a 4th Brigade of the 7th Division. And if you can visualize Al Anbar province, it will be stationed right smack dab in the middle of Al Anbar. And it should be out there on about the March time frame of 2008.

For the remainder of the brigades for next year, a focus on 4th Brigade for the 3rd Division. That will give the 3rd Brigade its -- let me break just for a minute and tell you: The Iraqi Service Plan, as you know, envisions each division having four brigades, each brigade having three battalions. So as you can imagine, there are a number of divisions that have four brigades, or will

shortly have four brigades. There are some that are still short of their four-brigade complement. And 2008, early 2009 in current force generation plans, those four brigades will be generated for those divisions. In particular, the 4th brigade of the 3rd Division will be generated mid next year and it will be in Nineveh province. And then that will be followed by the remaining division - or brigade for the 12th division, as well as the 4th Brigade for the 10th Division. So that will round out 13 divisions, each division with four brigades.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. HOLT: All right. And Jarred.

Q Yes, sir. Thank you for your time.

One major question would be to discuss the Concerned Citizens -- their integration into either the Iraqi National Police or specialized army units and how the interaction is on the local level -- Anbar south of Baghdad, Mahmudiyah, Diyala province -- how the actual Iraqi army is working along with the new kind of recruits who were former Sunni insurgents.

GEN. SWAN: Let me just make several comments. Number one, the Concerned Local Citizen program, as you know, is important.

And it is important for a number of different reasons, not the least of which is, within any insurgency framework certainly the local security is important.

The second piece -- I will not comment on the police but I will comment on the army. And you mentioned specialty army units. In my view, that is, that is -- I wouldn't categorize them that way. And the current planning, as I understand it, is that the induction of any concerned local citizens that are willing to join the Iraqi army, are under the same constraints as anyone else, or under the same obligations as anyone else who wants to join the Iraqi army -- and that is they are joining a national army and they can be employed anywhere within the country of Iraq that they are directed to do, so.

So from a standpoint of "specialty units," I wouldn't categorize them certainly as that. They would be inducted into the army; they wouldn't be special units; and if they -- they will be employed in a battalion structure; and wherever the army wants to put them, the army will put them.

That may or may not be the same as with concerned local citizens that want to become part of a local security structure -- for example, police forces. And I would defer that to the expertise of General Phillips and the folks down at CPAT to be able to shed more light on it than that. But from my perspective, and my understanding, Concerned Local Citizens, relative to the army, they would be inducted, vetted, screened, integrated into the Iraqi army, as would any other recruit.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

Okay, anybody else on line? I thought I heard another click there a minute ago. Okay, well, any follow-up questions?

Q If I could, sir. This is D.J. Elliott again. I keep looking at the Order of Battle and I keep coming up with their missing field artillery. What sort of schedule are they for -- start getting fires units?

GEN. SWAN: Yeah, that's a great question. The Iraqi service plan that was just recently worked and approved for the Army, is to create an artillery regiment for each division. And those capabilities would not begin to be put into the Iraqi army until 2009. Q Is there a way we can get the PowerPoint presentation about the breakdown -- as you were saying, the battalions, the brigades, into the divisions, because it's --

GEN. SWAN: And I'll refer you to -- Dan Williams is sitting here and he will have to run the trap line checks on that. And I'll refer you back to Dan if I can to see what we can provide and what we can't provide, if that's okay with you.

(No response.)

MR. HOLT: Okay, that'll be -- that'll be fine. And if -- what we can't work -- we can work through Kevin up at MNFI, and he can get it --

GEN. SWAN: Sure. You bet.

MR. HOLT: And then I'll get it distributed. All right.

Q General, Andrew again. Going back to logistics for a second, logistics isn't that difficult to do. Is there any way you're -- do we already have logistic experts embedded with them? I mean, I teach log -- I own an export-import business for 25 years, a lot of that's common sense, and more common sense, and thinking ahead more than 48 hours.

GEN. SWAN: You know, Andrew, you make a -- you make an interesting point. And with your experience, you know, it's like Clausewitz said, "Everything in war is simple. The simple things are the most difficult." And you would think that logistics, from the standpoint of the Iraqi army and with modern capabilities, would be something that is relatively easy to do. But I'd ask you to keep in mind several points.

Number one, they did have an old system. That old system was broken apart in 2003, so really it is beginning -- not the old system, necessarily, but any log system is really beginning and is in its infancy -- from really being focused and started, I would say, last year in 2006.

The second point, Andrew, that I would make is that, you know, unlike just-in-time logistics that we may want back home for the ability to be able to have throughput distribution, electronic connectivity, databases that manage workloads and manage logistics loads and warehousing capabilities -- that, as you know, is not in existence here within the Iraqi army today.

Nor, quite frankly, is it necessarily something that they want to have in existence, which was the third point that I would make to you. And that is, that any logistics structure that the Iraqis are going to implement needs to be one that they understand and that they agree with. And the fourth point that I would make to you, Andrew, or make for you, is you're exactly right about the levels of advisers. I will tell you that down to the division and battalion level, embedded within their current procedures, there are advisers on the core

MiTT teams that go all the way down into the headquarters and support companies, to battalion level.

From CMAT, we have really very robust logistics expert teams that are in every support unit -- and I would call those operational logistics locations, and trying to assist in establishing what the right logistics policies and procedures are. And that effort, I believe, is beginning to pay some very good dividends.

Let me just give you two examples. One example, I was (fondly ?) saying to myself that the next repair parts requisition that was for replenishment, off of a prescribed load list, would be the first replenishment requisition. We have some success going on right now with the Iraqis, beginning to have mandatory parts list stockages down at the battalion level, and actually using those and then replenishing the supply. That, to you and me, would seem like a relatively small step if we were in the States. Over here it is a huge deal, and I'm very, very happy that that's beginning to go on.

Number two, is that for all of the right reasons, as you can (imagine ?) -- from concern about equipment falling into the wrong hands, to concerns about corruption, they have very centralized systems for a number of their commodities, most importantly ammunition. And where every ammunition requisition up to now has had to come all the way back to Baghdad get 29 or 30 signatures and then get issued back out, they have recently established their policy to be able to have the appropriate level of commanders authorize the releases of ammunition, and also established a telephonic release process.

So you think about our history -- the establishment of the Quartermaster General, and the Quartermaster Corps -- all of that took time. They've been doing it now for about a year or two within the new Iraqi army, and they're making some great progress but it is slow. And -- just have to understand the environment, as you do, I'm sure.

Q -- (inaudible) -- Also the Iraqis used to run logistics as a -- (not as a ?) (?) as the way to put people in for jobs. And hopefully they're not doing that now.

GEN. SWAN: Well, it's an interesting point, Andrew, because I was just out again out in al-Anbar, out at Habbaniyah -- was talking to maintenance company commander of the regional support unit. And that's exactly what he is out combing for -- recruits for mechanics, so he can bring them into the army. They can be identified on their -- on their record that they are mechanics; we can get them into school; and then they'll be back out assigned to his maintenance company. So you're exactly right. Q Quick question, sir. First, what was the rationale from the Iraqi government's side is to move to the M-16 as opposed to the AK? And -- (inaudible) -- answer that one.

GEN. SWAN: I don't know. For sure, I can tell you what I've heard. What I have heard is that they believe that it is a new and improved weapons system. They see Coalition Forces using it to great effect and they take it as a mark of moving forward to be able to have a weapons system that does not necessarily have the pedigree that the AK-47 has.

So from where I sit, and what I see, they actually have units, believe it or not, in the Iraqi army that see their sister units being fielded the M-16 and they are -- they are not happy about it. They want to know when their turn

is. So it is a -- it is a badge, in my view, a badge of national pride for them to get the M-16.

What was your follow-on to that?

Q Yes, sir. The other one was, will the units -- we see them coming on-line, the new units going through training, as you were stating, which is very impressive -- how about the units that have been, and the divisions that have been around for two to three years, do all their formations go back through a refresher training, because obviously they were thrown together so quickly during a war that they didn't have a chance to go through a lot of the training originally?

GEN. SWAN: Hey, that is a tremendous question, and let me talk to you about the next leap in Iraqi army training. And you just -- I'm glad that you brought that up.

You were exactly right that up until -- certainly from the formation and the beginning of the formation, units, by and large, their only training and their sole training was as a result of institutional training. Soldiers would go to school and then they'd go right into a unit, the unit would go right into combat.

As we go through Iraqi units today, because of the operations tempo, you can imagine that home station training is not high on their priority list, nor is rotation training as we would do at 29 Palms or at the National Training Center or the Joint Readiness Training Center to maintain and grow critical combat skills and unit collective task proficiency and leader proficiency and staff proficiency.

The institutional training base is pretty well set. Now, what we're working with the Iraqis on is being able to establish one training center per division that provides a menu of training capabilities to the division commander for home station training. And let me give you the major components of that.

The first is expanded capabilities indeed for individual training, just like we would do in any division back in the states. The second is local leader training primarily focused on junior officers and also non-commissioned officers. The third is expanding capabilities for staff training focused in particular at the battalion level for the integration of battlefield operating systems.

The fourth and really the -- well, the fourth is expanded range training capabilities for all of the weapon systems associated with that unit, that division. And fifth and probably most important are some collective task training capabilities, situational training exercise land, classrooms, outdoor rehearsal sites, those kinds of -- and the types of facilities like a mountain facility or a close-quarter combat training facility that is in proximity of each division, and each division commander then can run a collective training program that increases and is based off the needs of his unit.

The final component of that -- and you're all familiar with combat -- we call it Combat Training Center Besmear. We currently have the 3rd Brigade of the 11th going through unit-set fielding there that I started us off with. It is a capability for rotational unit training where companies and battalions can come out of the line, go to Besmear, conduct enhanced collective task training at the battalion level, company level, platoon level -- again, to

increase proficiency. I don't know what the frequency of that training would be, how often a battalion can get to have one of those kinds of rotation experiences. You know, we have difficulty sometimes scheduling those in our Army and Marine Corps as well.

But anyway, that is the base footprint for the Iraqi training system. One training center per division providing a menu of training capabilities for that division commander, individual leaders, staff, and collectives.

MR. HOLT: All right. Did someone else have a question? (No audible response.) All right.

Thank you very much, sir. Brigadier General Robin Swan is with us today for the Bloggers Roundtable. Thank you, sir. Commanding general, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team and the multinational security transition commander, Iraq. Do you have any closing comments for us, sir? Closing thoughts?

GEN. SWAN: No, it was my pleasure to be with you all today, and I'll look forward to doing it again.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Be looking forward to hearing from you again. Thank you very much.

GEN. SWAN: Okay, thank you.

Q Thank you for the time and the upbeat -- and the update on Ramadi. I appreciate that.

GEN. SWAN: Yeah, you bet. You bet, Andrew. Thanks.

END.